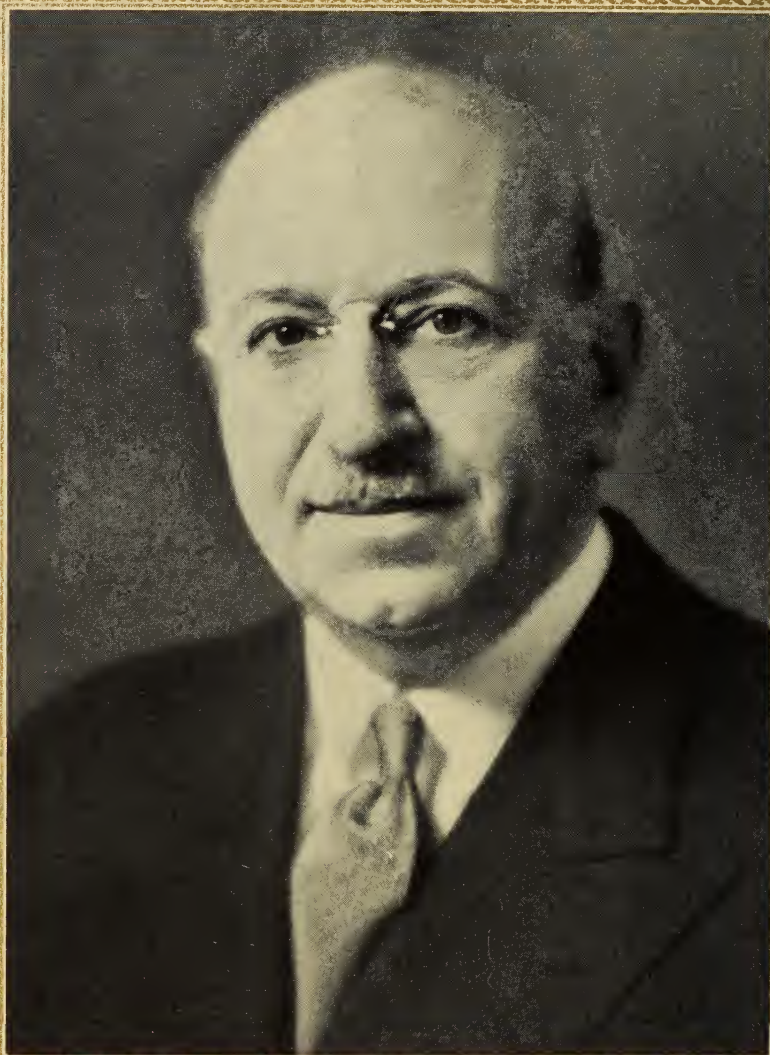


~~HH.~~ 920
H-1a

Henry Hooper



B.
H8161h

ILLINOIS ACCLAIMS

Its Greatest Governor



ON February 8, 1940, Governor Henry Horner of Illinois announced he had yielded to the advice of his physicians and would not be a candidate for a third term.

The people of the State knew that Governor Horner's conscientious administration of the duties of his office had exacted a heavy toll on his strength.

Party affiliations and personal prejudices were forgotten. Expressions of admiration for and gratitude to this man who was a statesman and a humanitarian rather than a politician came from every corner of Illinois. And in these expressions the newspapers, Democratic, Republican and Independent, took the lead.

During his seven years as Governor of Illinois, Henry Horner had earned the admiration and respect of the State's citizens to a degree that few men in public life are able to attain. Something of the regard in which he is held is embodied in an editorial published by the *East St. Louis Journal* four days after the announcement. It said:

"As Henry Horner renounces further political ambition, even though he steps aside reluctantly and through necessity, he will

be honored by members of all parties from Galena to Cairo. He has given of his time, his energy and of his private means without question and without complaint, to the State of Illinois. It is not necessary that he give his life."

On the same subject, the *Barry Adage* said: "To those Illinoisans who have come to rely on Mr. Horner for a high standard of public service in the Governor's office, the loss is a hard one to take.

"Governor Horner might be a well man today had he not been such a conscientious public servant. He might have eased the burden of his governorship by turning over more work to his subordinates, by allowing his advisors to make more decisions. But Mr. Horner has always realized the responsibilities he bore as Governor—responsibilities which only he could discharge."

Citing Governor Horner as "among the best Illinois has had" and pointing out the "tremendous strides in social legislation" made under his leadership, the *Chicago Times* outlined his achievements thus:

"Not only did Mr. Horner succeed in restoring the credit of the State and removing the tax burden from real property by means of the sales tax, but he was able greatly to expand the services of the State government, still maintaining a pay-as-you-go basis.

"State aid to schools was raised to the highest point in history. Old age pensions and unemployment insurance were inaugurated. A long-delayed building program for the State institutions was inaugurated and comprehensively carried out. Public health services were augmented and improved.

"Under Governor Horner there was passed the uniform motor vehicle anti-theft law which, together with improved law enforcement methods developed by the State's attorney's office,

is largely responsible for the 99 per cent reduction in Chicago automobile thefts. The State Highway Police Department has been enlarged and given new powers during his administration, aiding law enforcement and reducing traffic accidents. After years of effort the Governor succeeded in obtaining a drivers' license law."

"It was Horner," the *Vandalia Leader* declared, "who set about repairing the weaknesses, restoring the State's operating machinery and as a result of his efficiency, Illinois is out of the red and the commonwealth's business matters are moving forward in a progressive way."

Governor Horner was characterized by the *Peoria Journal Transcript* as "one of the best governors it (Illinois) ever had," and by the *Sullivan Progress* as "the ablest chief executive Illinois has had in many years", while the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* asserted: "In his departure Illinois loses a capable, hard-working public servant. He gave a pretty good account of his stewardship to the people of Illinois during a period of distressing economic conditions. Mr. Horner's retirement will close a page in Illinois governmental history for which it need offer few apologies."

Support from Henry Horner stamped any action with an honesty and sincerity of purpose which few doubted. He was "the strong man of the party—able and conscientious," according to the *Aurora Beacon-News*, "and with a heart that beats for the underprivileged," while the *St. Louis Star-Times* declared: "Horner's two terms have been distinguished by the Governor's personal insistence on decent political standards . . . by his intelligent leadership in co-operating with the federal security program, by the progressive social legislation he has championed, by his sensible financial policies."

"Mr. Horner came into office by the support of Republicans and Democrats alike," said the *Decatur Review*, "and gave of his strength in service to the State. His decision to conserve his health will be accepted by all his close friends who feared he might sacrifice his life to lead his party."

From across the Mississippi where the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* has been an observer of the Illinois political scene for many years came this comment on Henry Horner's administration as governor:

"Illinois has come so to rely on its security in Mr. Horner's day-in-and-day-out devotion to high standards of public service that the realization that it must lose him from the governor's chair is a hard blow.

"Henry Horner cannot run for re-election because he sacrificed his health in overwork in office. He might have trusted more to others and remained a well man, but he is one of those who believe with Cleveland that a public office is a public trust. . . . His rescue of Illinois from bankruptcy, his insistence (backed by numerous vetoes) upon living within income, his sponsorship of scores of progressive measures, his readiness to stand above partisanship—such highlights from his record indicate a great State's debt to Mr. Horner."

Predictions of an honored spot for Henry Horner in Illinois governmental history were numerous among the newspapers.

"When he departs from office he will have left an imprint on the State's history which time will not dim," said the *Rock Island Argus*. "His monument will be a vast volume of humane legislation which he has placed upon the statute books, and his own splendid exemplification of integrity, character and consecrated service in high position."

And the *Dupo Herald-Tribune* declared, "History will remember him far more pleasantly than any of his predecessors. . . . His splendid record sets a monumental example for his successors to follow. It is to be hoped that the future governors of Illinois will be endowed with the same high qualities and abilities with which Henry Horner was possessed. And in expressing this hope, we know we are asking a lot. He was and is truly a great governor of a great State and Illinois is extremely unfortunate in losing him at this time."

The *Cuba Journal* echoed, "He will go down as one of Illinois' ablest and best governors."

"For 26 years Henry Horner has been, in the fullest sense of the word, a public servant," said the *Chicago Times* in reviewing Governor Horner's lengthy career. "Few men have been more devoted to their trust. Of him it may truly be said that he has worn himself out in zealous—perhaps, sometimes, over-zealous—service to his city and state.

"Henry Horner has earned a rest from office. And he richly deserves the deepest gratitude of the people he has served so well."


"That the Governor's illness made it unwise for him to attempt the rigors of another campaign is a source of deep regret to the vast majority of good citizens of all parties who recognize his record as one of faithful public service," said the *Springfield Illinois State Register*. And the "voters of the State would have honored him with a third term", had he been a candidate, according to the *Belleville News-Democrat*.

The essence of the wishes of the people of his State, which Governor Horner will carry with him back to private life, is embodied in this excerpt from an editorial appearing in the *Springfield Illinois State Journal*:

“By his retirement as a candidate at this time, Henry Horner can continue to serve Illinois in other ways than as its chief executive. His counsels carry influence, and perhaps as a private citizen he can urge things he could not advocate as governor because the web of politics held him too closely. It is the hope of all that in coming years he may recover his strength and be able to enjoy the neighborliness of the State he loves so well.”



(Not Printed at State Expense)



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

<http://archive.org/details/henryhorner00np>

